7: Shklovsky -- 46-47 T-3 (1891-92) 1916 Yakut
116, 178, 622

"At one time the position of head man of the clan was hereditary. His power was unlimited and he might torture his kinsmen and put them to death, or sell them as slaves and take all their possessions. Now the headman is elected to his position, and he has about the same jurisdiciton as a Russian village [47] starosta, the only reminder of bygone supreme power being a cutlass."

12: Galitzin -- 144 [2] N-2 (no date) 1853 Yakut
116, 104, 162, 631, 622, 666

"As wealth among the Yacoutes consists in numerous flocks, from this circumstance it follows that they take care to live dispersed in small groups of two or three yourtes, so as to have at hand sufficient pasturages. A certain number of these little villages form a notchlegh, administered by a kniazetz or small prince. Several notchelghi compose an oulouse, which is governed by a golova; these different functions are elective. The inhabitants of a notchlegh call themselves tjonobout, or of the same kind. When they make an election, each elector depostis his vote in a box divided in as many compartments as there are candidates; then the votes are counted, and the candidate who has obtained the largest number is proclaimed. Besides, it is always in the power of the governed to depose the chief with whom they are dissatisfied, in order to proceed to a new election. The district of Yakoutsk contains six oulouses, with a population of about 40, 000: there are, besides about 30, 000 Yacoutes settled in the government of Yeninseisk and in other parts of Siberia."

17: Erman-- 273-274 N-3 (1828-29) 1850 Yakut-1-2
116, 115, 622, 631, 177.63 Russia
636.63

"In Ulakhansk, sixty-one versts from Toyon aruin, I met in the yard where we alighted a noble chieftain of the Yakuts, who was on his way to a judicial inquiry. He was distinguished from the rest of his countrymen by superior stature, for the Yakuts, though broad-shouldered and very strong-boned, are collectively not above the middle size. He was also in good case, as befits, according to the ideas of the Yakuts, those who are well off; for the adage says, 'To eat much meat and to grown fat upon it, is the highest destiny of men.' I admired this man's frock, made of blue cloth with red facings and white metal buttons; it had an old-fashioned European look, and was, doubtless, made in imitation of some suit of honour presented to one of his predecessors by the Tsar. He gave me to understand, however, with national pride, that his genuine Yakutian cap was better worth looking at and more valuable also. It was lined with squirrel-skins, and outside was very artificially made up of sable, otter, and black fox furs; it had, moreover, very odd-looking appendages made of the fur of the glutton, which hung down over his back.

This chief's feelings respecting the dignity of his nation, and above all, of his own dignity, displayed themselves throughout all his conversation, which he carried on in broken Russian. --Thus, he always named Yakutsk 'the city of the Yakuts;' and he congratulated me on my prospect of soon visiting its rich yurts. He told me that the administration of justice, and the general internal management of society among the

Yakuts, are still left in their hands. Their immediate chiefs and magistrates are still of their own nation, . . . The whole race has been divided, from time immemorial, into certain tribes; each of which is again distributed into Ulúsi, [RCH: the Ulus is a sub-tribe] or communes. The heads of the latter are chosen by the Yakuts, from the chief families, for life. They are called Toyoni; which [274] the Russians very properly translate by Knyás or prince. But it is extremely unbecoming, on the other hand, to put these nobles and other heads of tribes on an equal footing with the mayor of a Russian village, and so entitle them merely gólova! These principal dignitaries remain in office only three years; the Yakuts always choose them from the number of their acknowledged princes, and they are therefore not inferior, certainly, to a Russian governor; and, particularly, because the charge of public administration among the Yakuts is defrayed by that people themselves. When he and other Toyoni required cattle on the road for an official journey, they levied them not on the Russians, but on their own people."

38: Dobell--38 [2] G-2 (1812-13) 1830 Yakut
116, 262, 465, 622

"Many of them actually live, the greater part of the winter, on the inner bark of the yellow pine tree, scraped fine, and mixed with beef or horse's fat. I have been confidently informed, that the Yakut Princes and head men feed their labourers in this manner; giving them besides two miserable suits of clothes, and ten or twelve rubles per annum. This keeps the poor labourers constantly in debt; for the allowance of their masters both for food and raiment is insufficient."

38: Dobell--43 [3] G-2 (1812-13) 1830 Yakut
116, 181, 556, 622, 692

"In general they are great talkers, and too much disposed to litigation. To gratify this passion, they have obtained permission from the Government of Irkutsk to have what is called in Russian a doom, or petty court of justice of their own, where their golovoi, or head man, with some of the princes, presides to decide the quarrels and disputes which occur amongst them. As the doom is at Yakutsk, of course the golovoi and the princes who preside, are obliged to live there, at a great expense; and this expense is paid by the Oulooses in general: they also receive handsome salaries. Here, then, is another plan of enriching the rich and impoverishing the poor; for I have been confidently informed that it has produced no good whatever; on the contrary, the Yakuts are constantly dissatisfied with the decisions and almost invariably refer their causes to the Russian tribunals for a final settlement."

46: Cottrell--137 T-2 (1840) 1842 Yakut
116, 177, 622, 623 Russia
636.62

"The former [RCH: i.e., Yakuts] are divided into communities, which are governed by golovás and knaizetzes or ancients. The first are chosen among the second, and they from and by the common people; all, however, are subject to provincial commissaries appointed by the Russian government. From the resemblance between the Russian word knäs or prince, and knaizetz, the latter got the title of highness in Russia, but the Yakuts before the Russian conquest even never had independent princes. The title of golová, on the contrary, being one of very slight importance in Russia, they were placed below the knaizetzes, though at home they enjoy much higher rank and authority."

/203 cont./

122 Only with difficulty could I now bring myself to make astronomical observations, in spite of the stars shining most brilliantly in this magnificently clear air. The tips of my fingers were in a condition of continually losing skin and after every observation, during which I had to expose them for some time, were so frightfully painful that I -- otherwise not at all very sensitive -- once broke out in loud, nervous weeping and had to be taken back into the yurt almost forcibly by Czekanowsky.
[132] The most extreme cold during which I made successful observations with a Pistor reflecting circle and mercury horizon was -33.7° R. Since mercury freezes at -32° R., I kept mine in the warm yurt for some time before the observation so that it /204/ would not stiffen too quickly outside. The little needles of ice floating in the air, which cover the instrument and particularly the artificial horizon, are the greatest annoyance during observations; therefore in the most intense cold I could only observe the moon -- the sun, of course, no longer appeared above our horizon -- inasmuch as the images of even the brightest stars were difficult to see and often disappeared at the moment of observation. My respiratory organs also suffered considerably, because I could bring the instrument near my face only by holding my breath.

122 The next day's journey brought us into more cordial regions
123 again. After an eight-hour trip we reached the timber line, after we had come over a ridge into the river basin of the Omoloí (which flows into the Arctic Ocean) and thus had crossed the border of the Shigánsker Ulússes /Zhigansk ulus/. Our pleasure at having again reached the protective forest was dimmed only by the departure of our kind courier Atschkássow, who on the next day accompanied us only on the short distance to the next stan, Dshejelák-Dshaná, where we were to find new guides and
• [622] fresh reindeer. We found here an excellent well-heated yurt, the dwelling of one of the wealthiest Jakuten /Yakut/ of the Werchojansk district, Martin Borogón, who at the same time was the community elder and had to provide for our further journey. Unfortunately he himself was on a trip, but he had instructed his

53:Tokarev and Gurvich E-4 (no date) 1964
RV2 Yakut RV2

developed class relationships and certain very archaic survivals of ancient times. By the time the Russians arrived in the first half of the 17th century, the Yakuts had divided up into independent tribes. The largest and strongest of these were the Kangalastsy and Namy on the left bank of the Lena, and the Megins, Borogons, Betuns and Baturustsy between the Lena and the Amga; these very large tribes (to judge by the Russian tribute registers) numbered from 2000 to 5000 persons each. The smaller tribal groupings, some of which were independent and some of which belonged to those mentioned above, were reckoned in dozens. In the Russian sources these tribes are called "volosts," but the Yakut name for them was evidently d'on or aymakh. These tribes often warred with one another, and sometimes banded together temporarily for joint operations. All members of one tribe were considered fellow clansmen, which, among other things, was indicated by the fact that the "volosts" were exogamic groups. In turn, the tribes divided into smaller clan groups. The bond between fellow clansmen showed up in the custom of mutual assistance and vendetta, which, incidentally, was often replaced by blood money.

At this period, however, the clan-tribal structure was already in a state of decomposition. The tribes and clans were headed by the military aristocracy—the toyons. These possessed large herds of cattle and employed the labor of slaves and dependent fellow clansmen on their farms; they were also the military leaders. Heading detachments of armed servants and junior fellow clansmen, the toyons raided each other's territory, and frequently looted the farms of the free members of the community, seizing their cattle and destroying their economic independence. These toyon wars and raids were one of the factors which speeded up the decomposition of the clan commune. The ruined members of the commune were reduced to the status of "balyksyts" (poor people without cattle, or fishermen), or else became the indentured slaves of the toyons. Most of the slaves (kuluts or bokans) originated in this way.

The system of slavery among the Yakuts was fairly peculiar in form, containing certain patriarchal elements. The number of slaves was small; even the richer toyons had no more than 15 or 20, and much more frequently there were one to three slaves for each master. The slave usually had his own family and often lived in a separate yurt. Slavery was hereditary. Some of the slaves—the adult males—were part of the armed band of the toyon. On the other hand, cases were known in which the slaves led a hard life and their masters treated them cruelly, and we also know of the manifestation, although embryonic, of class feeling against exploitation (flight by groups of slaves and so on).

The problem of whether or not there was feudalism among the Yakuts before the Russians arrived still remains unsolved in Soviet historical-ethnographic literature.

Some writers (S. V. Bakhrushin and O. V. Ionova) think that early feudal relations among the Yakuts began to form in the pre-Russian period; they consider the presence of groups of semidependent people "living close to" the toyons, as well as the custom of lending cattle for grazing (the later khahaas), to be signs of this. Tokarev considers that a feudal-type relationship only began to form among the Yakuts after they had been annexed to Russia.

As regards land ownership, the older communal-clan system was still in force just before the Russians arrived. The communal form of land use not only predominated in forest hunting grounds and pastures, but the fisheries and even the meadows were still by and large in common use. Nevertheless, the meadows and fisheries had already been taken over to

Nevertheless, the meadows and fisheries had already been taken over to The Yakuts 271

some extent by the toyons. The seizure of them was accompanied by a hard struggle since the communes resisted the toyon claims to their own land.

Such, in general terms, was the social structure of the Yakuts by the time the Russians arrived. Tsarist policy between the 17th and 19th centuries speeded up the development of social relations, so that Yakut society just before the October Revolution had already changed very much from what it had been three centuries ago. Nevertheless, many phenomena proved extremely stable and retained their archaic nature until recent times. Just before the Revolution the division of the Yakuts into strata according to the property they possessed was extremely marked. Most of the population did not even have enough cattle for the hunger norm (this norm, when the grade of the livestock was low, was considered to be two head of livestock per person), whereas in the few toyon households there were several dozen head of livestock per person. However, the unequal distribution of the livestock was by no means anything new for the Yakuts. But the question of land was different. The system which had grown up in the domain of land tenure was of comparatively recent origin. Since the arrival of the Russians in Yakutiya, the process of decomposition of the ancient communal-clan system of using the meadowland had been stepped up. The toyons were vigorously seeking to acquire the common lands. The development of private land ownership by the toyons continued to the 1760's, when certain measures introduced by the Russian administration gave it a new direction. In 1765, Yakuts were forbidden to buy or sell land, and in the next few years, through the activity of the Yakut Tribute Commission, the distribution of land in accordance with the so-called "sable" and "fox" taxes or parts of them was introduced among the Yakuts. Later on, in about 1820, this distribution of land assumed the form of the so-called "class system" of land usage, which legalized the extremely unequal distribution of the land, though, on the surface, it seemed to be something like common land usage. This "class system," which was later modified, had assumed the following form by the beginning of the 20th century.

The unit of measurement of land among the Yakuts was the "rick" (*кургу*), a plot of land from which one hayrick could be mown (the size of the rick ranged from 10 to 30 cartloads, sometimes as many as 40 or 60). These allotments made up plots (*олбуго*) which were extremely varied in size, depending on the "class," and there were three or four "classes." One first-class plot (*бастыг* or *уллаан олбуо*) was equal to two second-class plots (*орто олбуо*) and three or four third-class plots (*кенниki* or *хуччуguй олбуо*). The population was also divided into three or four classes: the toyon households belonged to the first class, and received a first-class plot, the middle households were usually assigned to the second class and the poorer people to the third and fourth classes, each receiving the corresponding clan plot. Thus, the system itself gave the toyons plots of land which were three or four times larger than those of the poorer people. It is true that in return for this the toyons had somewhat greater obligations, but the difference in their extent was extremely small. However, this inequality was by no means the only thing. The toyons actually possessed much more land, having seized it in a variety of different ways. For example, they had several plots, rather than just one, by registering them in the names of their children, workers and so on. It was also the custom to give officials (who were more often than not themselves toyons) additional plots of land, so-called *указ-кургу* (from the Russian word "ukaz" [edict]), for which, incidentally, there was no payment. The influential toyons also obtained extra plots called ugayy (or kharyy).